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## Lenten Guidelines 2023

### February 22 – April 6

*The annual observance of Lent is the special season for the ascent to the holy mountain of Easter. Through its twofold theme of repentance and preparation for Baptism, the season of Lent disposes both the catechumens and the faithful to celebrate the Pascal Mystery (Ceremonial of Bishops, 249).*

It begins on Ash Wednesday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>. It ends on Holy Thursday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, before the celebration of the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper.

**Ash Wednesday** marks the beginning of Lent, which is “a powerful season, a turning point that can foster change and conversion in each of us. We all need to improve, to change for the better. Lent helps us and thus we leave behind old habits and the lazy addiction to the evil that deceives and ensnares us. During the season of Lent, the Church issues two important invitations: to have a greater awareness of the redemptive work of Christ; and to live out one's Baptism with deeper commitment” (Pope Francis, General Audience, March 5, 2014).

The season of Lent is a special opportunity to grow spiritually through penitential practices, especially self-denial, almsgiving, and works of mercy.

Lent is also a time to emphasize the Sacrament of Penance.

Pastors are encouraged to offer the faithful various opportunities to celebrate this Sacrament, including individual Confession as well as Communal Penance Services. All priests are urged to ensure that every Catholic has the opportunity to celebrate this sacrament during Lent.

In addition, pastors are encouraged to have weekly prayer services, including the Stations of the Cross on Fridays, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction, Evening Prayer, as well as evening Masses. A homily or instruction should be included. Stations of the Cross are not to take place while the Blessed Sacrament is exposed on the altar. Likewise, the Eucharist is not to be distributed to the faithful at the end of the Stations of the Cross.

## General Guidelines and Practices

### Lenten Fasting and Abstinence

**Ash Wednesday** and **Good Friday** are obligatory days of universal fast and abstinence. Fasting is obligatory for all who have completed their 18<sup>th</sup> year until the beginning of their 60<sup>th</sup> year. Fasting allows

for one full meal and two smaller meals not to equal one full meal. Abstinence from meat is obligatory for all who have completed their 14<sup>th</sup> year of age.

**Fridays in Lent** are obligatory days of abstinence from meat for all who have completed their 14<sup>th</sup> year. As always, anyone for whom fasting or abstinence would pose a health risk is excused. For example, pregnant women (breastfeeding mothers) or people receiving medical treatment are not obligated to fast. Never the less, people specially in this category are invited to practice another form of fasting besides food.

## Lenten Liturgical Guidelines

The two Eucharistic Prayers for Reconciliation are appropriate for use during Lent. Each one has its own Preface, but they can also be used with the Prefaces of Lent.

During Lent, the use of musical instruments is allowed only to support the singing. Nevertheless, *Laetare* Sunday (Fourth Sunday of Lent), solemnities, and feasts are exceptions to this rule. The Alleluia is not said or sung, in any form, during Lent (not even on the Solemnities of St. Joseph or the Annunciation, in case these fall during Lent as it is the case this year) and it is replaced with an appropriate Lenten Gospel Acclamation. The use of the *Gloria* is also suspended during Lent, with the exception of solemnities occurring during the season.

## Memorials of Saints

All memorials during Lent, including obligatory memorials, are optional. If they are observed, it is only as commemorations. At the Office of Readings: add a third reading and a third responsory (of the saint) before the concluding prayer. At Mass: the collect of the saint may be used as the collect and the collect of the Lenten weekday may be used to conclude the universal prayer.

## Disposal of Holy Oils

“The pastor is to obtain the sacred oils from his own bishop and keep them carefully in a fitting place” (Canon 847). This happens at the annual Chrism Mass, this year on Monday April 3, 7:00 PM at the Cathedral.

“Each year when the bishop blesses the oils and consecrates the Chrism, the pastor should see that the old oils are properly disposed by burning and that they are replaced by the newly blessed oils” (*Book of Blessings*, 1127). If for any reason the holy oils cannot be burned, another acceptable practice is to bury them in sacred ground (for example, on the flower beds around the church ground)

## Lenten Environment

During Lent the altar is not to be decorated with flowers. The Fourth Sunday of Lent (*Laetare* Sunday), and the Solemnities of Saint Joseph and the Annunciation of the Lord are exceptions to this rule.

“In the Diocese of the United States, the practice of covering crosses and images throughout the church from this Sunday may be observed. Crosses remain covered until the end of the celebration of the Lord’s Passion on Good Friday, but images remain covered until the beginning of the Easter Vigil” (*Roman Missal*, introduction to the Fifth Sunday of Lent). This is an optional practice.

# Celebration of Sacraments and Rites during Lent

## **Sacrament of Reconciliation**

“The season of Lent is most appropriate for celebrating the sacrament of penance. Already on Ash Wednesday the people of God has heard the solemn invitation ‘Repent and believe in the Gospel.’ It is therefore fitting to have several penitential celebrations during Lent, so that all the faithful may have an opportunity to be reconciled with God and their neighbor and so be able to celebrate the paschal mystery in the Easter Triduum with renewed hearts” (*The Order of Penance*, 13). *The Order of Penance* ritual book contains two sample Lenten penitential services. It should be noted, however, that at such communal celebrations, general absolution may not be given.

When planning communal Reconciliation services for the parish, please be reminded that the “Order for Reconciliation of Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution” should be used.

The new English translation of the *Order of Penance* for use in the United States may be used on February 22, 2023 (Ash Wednesday) and its use will become obligatory on April 16, 2023 (Divine Mercy Sunday).

## **Anointing of the Sick**

The Anointing of the Sick and the Sacraments of Penance and can never be denied to the faithful who legitimately seek them. These sacraments can be celebrated on any day, including Good Friday and Holy Saturday.

## **Funerals during the season of Lent and the Easter Triduum**

The Lenten season should be reflected in the choice of music and scripture.

On Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday, a funeral Mass may not be celebrated. On these days, the body of the deceased may be brought into the church for a funeral liturgy outside of Mass, using the *Order of Christians Funerals*, part I, chapter 4. A Mass for the deceased should be offered as soon as possible as is convenient following Easter Sunday (*Order of Christian Funerals*, 107-203).

## **Marriages during the Season of Lent and the Easter Triduum**

Marriages during the season of Lent may not be the optimal choice. However, one cannot deny the sacraments to the faithful if they are properly disposed. If a marriage does take place during the Lenten season, there should be a marked moderation in the festivity, and the parish environment should not be altered from that of Lent. Couples celebrating the Sacrament of Matrimony are to be reminded that wedding plans should respect the nature of this liturgical season (e.g., flowers, music, etc.) The celebration of marriage (or the convalidation of marriage) is not permitted during the Easter Triduum.

## **Communion for the Sick and Viaticum**

Communion may be brought to the sick on all days except Holy Saturday. On this day, Communion may be given only as Viaticum. Communion services outside of the liturgy are not to be held on Holy Thursday,

Good Friday, or Holy Saturday. According to the Church's ancient tradition, except for Confession, the sacraments are not celebrated on Good Friday or Holy Saturday.

## **Infant Baptisms**

"To bring out the Paschal character of baptism, it is recommended that the sacrament be celebrated during the Easter Vigil or on Sunday when the Church commemorates the Lord's resurrection" (*The Order of Baptism of Children*, Introduction, 9). Nevertheless, the celebration of infant baptism is allowed during Lent. During the Easter Triduum, it is not allowed on Good Friday, and Holy Saturday morning.

## **Confirmation**

When Confirmation is celebrated on Sundays during Lent the Mass of the Day is celebrated, the readings of the day are used, and violet vestments are worn.

Please see link below for more information about celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation during Lent: <https://apps.la-archdiocese.org/confirmla/Documents/Confirmation%20during%20Lent%202023.pdf>

# **Particular Days of Lent**

## **Ash Wednesday, 22 February 2023**

"On the Wednesday before the First Sunday of Lent the faithful, by receiving the ashes, enter upon the season appointed for spiritual purification. This sign of penance, biblical in origin (see 2 Sam 13:19; Esther 4:1; Job 42:6; 1 Mac 3:47, 4:39; Lam 2:10) and preserved among the customs of the Church until our own day, expresses the human condition as affected by sin. In this sign we outwardly profess our guilt before God and thereby, prompted by the hope that the Lord is kind and compassionate, patient and abounding in mercy, express our desire for inward conversion. This sign is also the beginning of the journey of conversion that will reach its goal in the celebration of the reconciliation during the days leading to Easter" (*Ceremonial of Bishops*, 253).

For Mass on Ash Wednesday:

- Begins with the Sign of the Cross & Greeting ("The Lord be with you," "Let us pray," and the Collect).
- The Penitential Act is omitted.
- The Ashes are blessed and distributed after the homily (see below).
- The Creed is omitted; the Universal Prayer is said.
- The Mass is proper; Preface III or IV of Lent are appropriate for use.
- Eucharistic Prayer for Reconciliation I or II is recommended.
- *The Book of Blessings* (chapter 52) provides the ritual for distribution of ashes outside of Mass.

The blessing and imposition of ashes takes place only on Ash Wednesday, ordinarily during the celebration of the Eucharist. The *Roman Missal* contains the "Rite for the Blessing of Ashes within Mass". "The Order for the Blessing and Distribution of Ashes outside of Mass" is found in the *Book of Blessings*. If the Eucharist is not celebrated, the blessing and distribution is to take place within the celebration of the Liturgy of the Word. The minister for the blessing of ashes within the Mass is a bishop or priest. The minister for the blessing of ashes during a Liturgy of the Word is a bishop, priest, or deacon. Other persons may assist the

bishop, priest, or deacon in the imposition of ashes (e.g. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, and other lay persons). However, these persons do not bless the ashes. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may bring blessed ashes to the sick and those confined to their home. The reception of ashes is not an obligation of the faithful; anyone who is uncomfortable with the manner of distribution should not come forward.

The use of bottles, Q-tips or cotton balls for distribution of ashes is **not allowed**.

### **Application on the Forehead with the Thumb**

After the blessing of the ashes, the minister marks the forehead of the recipient with ashes using the thumb saying, “Repent and believe in the Gospel” or “Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.”

### **First Sunday of Lent, 26 February 2023**

The Sundays in Lent rank as Solemnities, although the *Gloria* is not sung or said. The Third Edition of the *Roman Missal* provides proper Prefaces for each of the Sundays in Lent, and a Prayer over the People before the final blessing is provided as an option.

#### **\*\*\*NOTE\*\*\***

Normally, the Rite of Election takes place on this First Sunday of Lent, but since Religious Education Congress is the same weekend, the Rite will take place Sunday, February 19 instead at the Cathedral.

Click the link below for information and registration. For those attending the Rite of Election at the Cathedral, please register here: <https://forms.gle/2oc2H7ZPEsZprqJg8>

### **Second Sunday of Lent, 5 March 2023**

Plans are in place to celebrate the Rite of Calling and Continuing Conversion as an Archdiocesan event at the Cathedral. For those attending the Rite of Calling at the Cathedral, please register here: <https://forms.gle/fWYcbhtyY3JHmbJ4A>

### **Third Sunday of Lent, 12 March 2023**

Proper Mass of the day (Third Sunday of Lent) or from the Ritual Masses: “The Scrutinies”.

A special intention for Pope Francis may be included in the Universal Prayer on the anniversary of his election as pope (13 March 2013).

### **RCIA Scrutinies**

For parishes that have members of the Elect who are preparing for the sacraments of initiation at the Easter Vigil on April 8, 2023, the three scrutinies are celebrated with them on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent (March 12, 19, and 26). The scrutinies “are rites for self-searching and repentance and are meant to uncover, then heal all that is weak...in the hearts of the Elect...and to bring out all that is upright and good” (RCIA, 141).

The Mass at which the scrutiny takes place uses the prayer texts from the Ritual Mass section – 2. For the Celebration of the Scrutinies – found in the *Roman Missal* (RCIA, 146, 156, 170, 177).

Because of the intimate connection between the readings and the scrutiny prayers, the readings for the particular Mass at which the scrutiny is celebrated uses the Cycle A readings (RCIA, 146).

The first presentation to the Elect is that of the Creed, made during the week following the first scrutiny (RCIA, 157-163).

*Daylight savings time begins today at 2:00 a.m. (Spring Forward)*

## **St. Patrick, Friday, 17 March 2023**

Second Patron of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles

## **Fourth Sunday of Lent (*Laetare Sunday*), 19 March 2023**

*Laetare* means “rejoice!” It is a joyful anticipation of Easter. “In this Mass, the color violet or rose is used. Instrumental music is permitted, and the altar may be decorated with flowers” (*Roman Missal*, introduction to the Fourth Sunday of Lent).

The second scrutiny is celebrated in preparation for the Baptism of the catechumens who are to be admitted to the Sacraments of Christian Initiation at the Easter Vigil. Proper Mass of the day (Fourth Sunday of Lent) or from the Ritual Masses: “The Scrutinies” (see Third Sunday of Lent above for more information).

*This year March 19 falls on the Fourth Sunday of Lent, the Mass proper takes precedence over the Solemnity of St. Joseph. Therefore, it is transferred to the following day.*

## **St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary: Monday, 20 March 2023**

For Mass on this solemnity:

- The Mass is proper (including the Preface: “The Mission of Saint Joseph”).
- The Gloria is said or sung.
- A Lenten Gospel acclamation is used (without “Alleluia”).
- The Creed is said.

It is the custom in some places to bless bread, pastries, and other food, a large portion of which is given to the poor. For the “Order of Blessing of St. Joseph’s Table”, see the *Book of Blessings*, nos. 1679-1700. See also the *Catholic Household Book of Blessings and Prayers* (from the USCCB Committee on the Liturgy, nos. 104-141).

## **Annunciation of the Lord, Saturday, 25 March 2023**

For Mass on this solemnity:

- Proper Mass of the Day (including the Preface: “The mystery of the Incarnation”)
- The Gloria is said or sung.
- A Lenten Gospel acclamation is used (without “Alleluia”).
- The Creed is said.
- Any Mass celebrated after 4pm, will be for the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent.

## **Fifth Sunday of Lent, 26 March 2023**

“In the Diocese of the United States, the practice of covering crosses and images throughout the church from this Sunday may be observed. Crosses remain covered until the end of the celebration of the Lord’s Passion on Good Friday, but images remain covered until the beginning of the Easter Vigil” (*Roman Missal*, introduction to the Fifth Sunday of Lent).

The proper Mass of the day (Fifth Sunday of Lent) is used or the ritual Mass (“The Scrutinies”) (see Third Sunday of Lent above for more information).

The third scrutiny is celebrated in preparation for the Baptism of the catechumens who are to be admitted to the Sacraments of Christian Initiation at the Easter Vigil.

If you have any questions, please contact the Office for Divine Worship (213) 637-7262.

## **Extra Lent & Easter Preparations**

### **Paschal Candle**

The paschal candle should be prepared, which for effective symbolism must be made of wax, never be artificial, be renewed each year, be only one in number, and be of sufficiently large size, so that it may evoke the truth that Christ is the light of the world. It is blessed with the signs and words prescribed in the Roman Missal (Circular Letter Concerning Preparation and Celebration of Easter Feasts, 82).

### **Time of Easter Vigil - Saturday, April 8, 2023**

In the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, Easter Vigil is celebrated at 7:45pm or later.

“The entire celebration of the Easter Vigil takes place at night. It should not begin before nightfall; it should end before daybreak on Sunday”. (82) This rule is to be taken according to its strictest sense. Reprehensible are those abuses and practices which have crept in in many places in violation of this ruling, whereby the Easter Vigil is celebrated at the time of day that it is customary to celebrate anticipated Sunday Masses. (Circular Letter Concerning Preparation and Celebration of Easter Feasts, 78)

**Notes:**

In the coming weeks, the Office for Divine Worship will issue Guidelines for Holy Week.

**USCCB Resources for Lent:** <https://www.usccb.org/prayer-worship/liturgical-year/lent>

**Liturgical Preparation Aid for Lent, the Sacred Paschal Triduum, and the Easter Season 2023 (Year A) from the FDLC:** <https://fdlc.org/2023/01/lte2023/>